

“Single Married Divorced or Widowed,” Part 3 - 1 Corinthians 7:6-9 – January 25th, 2015

- Today's teaching will be part three of a series I've titled, "Single Married Divorced or Widowed."
 - I'll need to preface all the teachings in this series with a warning of sorts concerning the delicate and mature subject matter we'll deal with.
 - I'll leave it to your discretion to decide whether or not you think it appropriate for your keiki, and if not, now's a good time to excuse them.
- Up to this point here in chapter seven the Apostle Paul has been answering questions that the Corinthians had asked him about in a letter.
 - It seems that they had become confused about certain matters pertaining to sexual immorality, marriage, divorce, being single or widowed.
 - It's for this reason that Paul, for what will be the rest of the book, answers their specific questions, starting with the first one in verses 1-2.
- 1. Why is sex so perverted? (Verses 1-2)**
- Here Paul answers their question about whether or not it's okay for even a husband and wife to have sex by virtue of the sexual immorality.
 - Because sex had been so perverted and sexual immorality so rampant in that day they were questioning whether or not to have sex at all.
 - Thankfully Paul clears this up by saying that yes, a husband should have sex with his wife, and the wife should have sex with her husband.
- 2. How frequent should sex be? (Verses 3-5)**
- Paul answers this by saying they should fulfill their marital duties, as neither the husband nor the wife have authority over their own bodies.
 - As such, they are to yield their bodies one to the other with the exception of a mutually agreed upon time for prayer and seeking the Lord.
 - However, he offers a stern warning that they are to come back together as soon as possible lest Satan tempt them for lack of self-control.
- 3. What if I'm single or widowed? (Verses 6-9)**
- 6 I say this as a concession, not as a command. 7 I wish that all of you were as I am. But each of you has your own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that. 8 Now to the unmarried and the widows I say: It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I do. 9 But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.
- v6-7 Paul as a concession not a command says he wishes they were all single like him but each has their own differing gifts from another.
 - v8 He then goes on to say to the unmarried and the widows that it would be good for them to remain unmarried as Paul himself has chosen.
 - v9 He says if they cannot control themselves sexually, then they should marry, because it's better to get married than to burn with passion.
- Kindly allow me to first sort through a couple of things here with respect to Paul, who, at the time he wrote this letter was no longer married.
 - There are no less than two reasons that we can know Paul, at one time, was married, the first of which is because of the Jewish customs.
 - Namely, that of observant Jews considering marriage a duty, so much so, that if a Jewish man was still single at age 20, he would be in sin.
- The second reason we know Paul was married at one time is that he was likely a member of the Sanhedrin, which required he be married.
 - Be that as it may, this begs the question of what happened to Paul's wife? Did she divorce him after his conversion, or was she deceased?
 - We don't know because we can't know, and the reason we can't know is because scripture is silent about it, for what I think is good reason.
- The second thing that I wanted to mention has to do with Paul clearly delineating between his own personal opinion and the Word of God.
 - More specifically, in verse six where he is careful to say that this is not a command, rather, he offers his personal opinion as a concession.
 - The reason I mention this is sometimes it's important that we distinguish between the personal opinion of man and the written Word of God.
- The third thing I want to point out has to do with Paul's mention of each having their own gift, whether it's the gift of singleness or marriage.
 - In other words, both being single and being married is a gift, such that, if you have the gift of being single, then Paul says stay unmarried.
 - Conversely, if you have the gift of being married, then get married, especially if you find that you are unable to control yourself sexually.
- Actually this is a litmus test in that burning with passion and uncontrollable sexual desires indicates you may not have the gift of singleness.
 - That's not to say it's the only test by which you can know, rather, it is to say, that if you burn with sexual desires it is better to get married.
 - Moreover, were they to get married for this reason, they would not be considered less of a Christian than the one who had remained single.
- Sadly, this false teaching that remaining single or being celibate is in some way more spiritual is alive and well today, in this the last days.
- 1 Timothy 4:1-3 (NKJV) — 1 Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, 2 speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, 3 forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.
- I suppose this is as good of a time as any to tackle the touchy topic of sex before marriage, as well as the courtship and the engagement.
 - This because, there are many Christian's who remain single yet wish they could find the right one but for whatever reason they have not.
 - While we'll talk more about this later when Paul in verse twenty-five expounds on it, I think it would be appropriate to address this matter.
- What follows, though not exhaustive are several questions that I've been asked over the years as a pastor as it relates to premarital issues.
 - The first one is, "why can't we just be married in God's eyes?" All being married means is that we would have a piece of paper that says so.
 - The simple answer is that we as Christians are to obey the laws of the land, and more importantly the Word of God concerning marriage.
- The second one is, "Can we live together, but not have sex?" At the risk of sounding too blunt, No, you will make a provision for the flesh.
 - Well, what if we sleep in separate rooms? No, because we're also to flee all appearance of evil, and this would appear outwardly as sinful.
 - Why is sex before marriage sinful? Answer, premarital sex is not bad because it's forbidden, it's forbidden because it's bad for you to do.
- Lastly, I'll bring it to a close by taking just a little bit of time to talk about singles who wish they were married but haven't found the right one.
 - Often times, I'm asked, "how will I know if they are the right one?" The best answer I can give is that it's more important to be the right one.
 - I'll take it a step further and suggest that this may be the reason why you still haven't met the right one. Maybe God can't introduce you yet.
- For me personally, if God had introduced me to my wife before we met in 1986, she wouldn't have wanted anything to do with me as I was.
 - Also, she didn't come to Christ until 1985, so if I had met her before then, I would have been unequally yoked with her as a non-Christian.
 - For those of you who are single, I want to encourage you to wait for the Lord as He prepares you for the one He is also preparing for you.